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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 13th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. AL-SHAALI (United Arab Emirates)

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AGENDA ITEM 95: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 95: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN (A/46/3 (chap. VI, sect. D), A/46/38, A/46/77, A/46/325, A/46/344, A/46/377, A/46/439, A/46/462, A/46/491, A/46/501)

1. Miss ANSTEE (Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna) said that 1991 marked a watershed in the affairs of the United Nations. Noteworthy among the achievements to which the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV) had contributed were the International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, held in 1987, which represented a new level of international cooperation in drug control; the 1987 United Nations Conference of African Ministers of Social Affairs, the first since 1958; the 1988 groundbreaking United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances; the adoption in 1989 of guidelines for action by the International Meeting on Human Resources in the Field of Disability; the first European meeting of the Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, held in 1990; the launching in 1991 of a new unified drug control programme and a series of special missions designed to offset the social impact of drastic economic adjustment programmes and to provide assistance to areas shaken by unprecedented environmental disasters. Other less dramatic but equally significant developments included the rationalization of the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and of the Commission for Social Development and the fact that as of September 1991, 108 States had become parties to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

2. The United Nations Office at Vienna had increased its cooperation with a wide network of non-governmental organizations and had strengthened its essentially catalytic role by reinforcing national remedy and recourse mechanisms for women. It had also developed information systems on women and on crime prevention, strengthened its links with specialized academic and research institutes and taken steps to make its reports more readable.

3. Through improved management and the use of extrabudgetary resources, the Office had managed to meet its increased responsibilities despite a reduction in real resources. It had greatly increased its operational outreach to developing countries through increased technical cooperation and advisory missions, helping those countries translate international agreements and guidelines into reality. It had also sought to find new ways of making the meagre regular budget allocations for social programmes go further through innovative schemes involving non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

4. There had, of course, also been some major disappointments in the last five years. The failure to place all United Nations social mandates under the UNOV framework, supported by some modest additional resources, had made the Office's task much more difficult. In addition, it was regrettable that sufficient funds had not been found for the Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life, which had had to be postponed indefinitely.

(Miss Anstee)

5. The United Nations Office at Vienna had been endeavouring to tie its individual programmes together, so that they might promote the broader cause of advancing social development. It had accordingly assembled them in a single unifying framework: "A Society for All", based on the proposition that society, as a creation of people, should endeavour to accommodate itself to the diversity of its members. The goals of society should be defined by its citizens, through the political process, the various formal and informal associations which represented the community, and the ability to make choices in the market-place.

6. The development of that new framework had been greatly facilitated by recent political changes, which meant that in dealing with social issues, the United Nations was no longer restricted to the narrow space left to it by two warring ideologies.

7. With the waning of the East-West conflict it was time for the international community to focus once again on the most fundamental issue: the persistent and ever-increasing chasm between the "haves" and the "have-nots".

8. Two messages on that subject were being sent to countries. The first, that espousal of the free market and private enterprise system was the way out of poverty and underdevelopment and the second, that development must focus on improvement of the human condition. However, in today's world, the process of wealth-creation was not driven by individuals but by large, organized and impersonal conglomerates in which major economic power was concentrated; furthermore, the exercise of economic and political power vested in those conglomerates resulted in interference with the universal market laws.

9. It was generally agreed that in developed countries that process did create wealth, but at a cost. The process could be and often was destructive - of individuals and groups, communities, environments, values and social solidarity. Uncorrected, it had a tendency to exclude substantial segments of society. The key social question was, then, to what extent should the institutions of a democratic State intervene in order to balance the unequal forces in society, taking care, at the same time, not to bring to a halt the process of the creation of wealth.

10. Developing countries faced a particularly difficult dilemma: how to participate in the international mechanism for creating wealth and still keep its destructive tendencies in check. Most developing countries needed to increase investments and savings by encouraging individuals in low-productivity sectors to invest their meagre resources and developed countries to provide more of those missing savings to developing countries.

11. Since the poorer countries were expected to espouse a free-market system at home, did not the stronger and richer countries have a reciprocal obligation to play by the same rules in their relations with those weaker

(Miss Anstee)

countries? While it had many advantages, a competitive global economy failed to provide acceptable solutions to many pressing social issues. For example, when left to its own devices, the free market system often did not respond to social needs. Efforts to solve social problems required closer cooperation among countries, based on the spirit of partnership.

12. Key social issues, which had previously been addressed in national settings, had become international concerns. In that connection, she wished to urge Governments, when deciding on the future unified structure of the United Nations, to give priority to social issues; otherwise the world, freed from earlier ideological disputes, would be faced with internecine conflicts within countries and between North and South.

13. Ms. SELLAMI-MESLEM (Director of the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Office at Vienna) said that the key question in the advancement of women was whether the Organization would achieve one of its major goals by the year 2000: de jure and de facto equality of women and men. From the content of the documents now before the Third Committee, that idea was not in the least utopian.

14. Equality before the law had formed the basis for the struggle for equality and was the principle upon which the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had been elaborated 10 years ago. While 109 States had become parties to the Convention, approximately 60 Member States had yet to do so, and they were often those in which the status of women was the least satisfactory.

15. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, mandated to monitor the implementation of the Convention, had limited resources and time. The Secretariat had provided advisory services to those Members States which had been unable to meet the deadline for the submission of their periodic reports. As a result, 25 reports were awaiting consideration, but owing to a shortage of funds, there was no guarantee that the Committee could give consideration to a report as soon as it was received.

16. Since its inception, the United Nations had considered the advancement of women as an essential but distinct aspect of the issue of individual rights. Accordingly, women's rights must be part of the agenda of the forthcoming World Conference on Human Rights.

17. Converting de jure equality into de facto equality was essential. The Commission on the Status of Women, at its next session, would be considering measures for removing current and future obstacles to equal rights, in particular special temporary measures, such as preferential treatment, which would place women on equal footing with men and would compensate for past discrimination.

18. A new approach to development issues was imperative. The old theory that a higher level of development led to the advancement of women was no longer

(Ms. Sellami-Meslem)

acceptable: without the advancement of women, there could be no development at all. Women of all categories, in developing and developed countries, should no longer be considered the beneficiaries or victims of development but the principal agents of that process.

19. Similarly, at a time when the process of democratization was increasing hopes for peace in the world, it should be recognized that democracy would not promote the advancement of women. Rather, without the advancement of women, there could be no democracy.

20. The issue of the advancement of women had not always been viewed favourably because it implied the need for profound changes in existing social, economic and political structures. The United Nations had to serve as a guiding light for all countries: it had to present the most effective and most cogent ideas and to provide information and practical support. The United Nations programme for the advancement of women had survived and been successful despite limited resources owing to close collaboration among the various participating organizations.

21. The world conference on women, to be held in 1995, would help define future orientations, strategies and practical measures designed to eliminate obstacles to the advancement of women. The success of the conference would depend on how well it was prepared, particularly to what extent activities at the international level were designed to reinforce activities at the national level, and how effectively conference costs were contained. Under the proposed budget for the United Nations, the Division for the Advancement of Women would be receiving a small additional allocation of resources and personnel for that preparatory work. The regular budget did not provide for any increase under the programme of activities for the advancement of women; furthermore, extrabudgetary resources would be reduced. In 1991, inadequate resources had caused the postponement of the Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life.

22. Finally, it was up to the Third Committee to decide what priority should be given to the issue of the advancement of women and how that issue was related to the others on its agenda.

23. Ms. SHIELDS (Director, International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women - INSTRAW) introduced the report of INSTRAW (A/46/325), noting that in view of its limited resources, the Institute had been constrained to pursue a catalytic role by assisting and encouraging others.

24. In response to General Assembly resolution 44/76, a report had been produced in consultation with the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and other United Nations agencies stressing the need for urgent attention to planning for the needs of a rapidly aging population in developing countries. The Institute had continued its involvement in workshops

(Ms. Shields)

to promote the relationship between users and producers of statistics at the national and regional levels. The workshops had stressed the need for special national surveys to ascertain the present situation of women and their needs, and had stressed the need for standardizing concepts, definitions and measurements to ensure comparability of data and statistics.

25. The major effort in the statistical field had been aimed at improving statistics on women in the informal sector with a view to helping countries to plan more effectively. Women's contribution in the informal sector had been undervalued or even invisible, with adverse economic and social consequences and undesirable effects on women's self-image. During the past two years the Institute had entered the final phase of a UNDP-funded project aimed at improving African women's role in the informal sector. Although the bulk of INSTRAW's work in the informal sector had focused on statistics, the Institute had recently held a consultative meeting in Rome, with financial assistance from the Italian Government, on "Macro-economic Policy Analysis of Women's Participation in the Informal Sector", which had produced a number of recommendations. Further work along the regional lines proposed in Economic and Social Council resolution 1989/43 and General Assembly resolution 44/60 was being explored and parallel regional programmes were being planned to investigate informal sector activity, with the aim of integrating women more fully in mainstream national economies. Failure to take account of the fact that women were already very much a part of every economy led to irrational planning, less effective policies and a tragic waste of human potential.

26. The Institute had continued its work on monitoring and evaluating programmes and projects to promote the inclusion of women. Unfortunately, the adoption of "women in development" policies, did not guarantee their application. Further monitoring was envisaged to check policy and practice in United Nations development and other agencies.

27. In view of the focus on the environment in the coming decade the Institute had assembled the data from its programmes on "Women, water supply and sanitation" and "Women, new and renewable sources of energy" as a basis for further research on women, the environment and sustainable development. It was imperative for women to be included from the outset in the planning and execution of programmes for the coming decade.

28. Following its policy of applying the general principles of "women in development" to sectoral issues, the Institute had continued its work on water, energy and credit, with the aim of providing assistance to agencies which recognized the need to include women in their development plans but lacked specific knowledge. The need to train future research workers, academics and policy makers had been recognized in a programme aimed at encouraging the inclusion of "gender in development" issues in university curricula.

(Ms. Shields)

29. The Institute was deeply indebted to the countries that had supported its work, in particular Norway, Finland and the Netherlands, which had funded an evaluation report which was proving indispensable in planning activities for the coming biennium.

30. In all its work, INSTRAW relied on voluntary contributions and the goodwill of donor countries. Its budget for the past biennium had been less than $3 million and it hoped that those who appreciated the essential nature of its work would consider helping it to do more.

31. Ms. CAPELING-ALAKIJA (Director, United Nations Development Fund for Women - UNIFEM) said that UNIFEM, which had been founded on a belief in women's capacity for leadership, had worked for the past 15 years to ensure that women's concerns were included in the global development agenda. Its people-centred approach to development was based on the simple idea that many of the differences between men and women were socially constructed and could therefore be changed. It was up to women and men of conscience to remove the obstacles and the discrimination that excluded women from full participation in society. The barriers facing women were documented in a recent publication by the Division for the Advancement of Women, UNFPA, UNICEF, the Statistical Office of the United Nations Secretariat and UNIFEM entitled "The World's Women: 1970-1990".

32. Despite the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women and the myriad projects that had flourished, two thirds of the world's women were poor and their numbers were growing. As long as women remained poor, the fragile ecosystem would continue to be threatened. Environmental degradation and poverty were mutually reinforcing. As an invisible force producing visible goods women had as much claim on the world's conscience as contaminated seas, polluted air, disappearing forests and a deteriorating land base. By helping to give them voice and visibility, UNIFEM hoped to have an impact on the follow-up programme for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED).

33. She emphasized the connection between disaster relief and long-term development assistance, illustrated by the current plight of millions of refugees, more than 75 per cent of them women and children. Yet policies and programmes designed to deal with those situations rarely dealt with the specific problems of women. Moreover, until recently disasters had been treated as separate events and relief operations had tended to ignore the implications for social and economic development. At the invitation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNIFEM had taken on the task of developing strategies for more effective action to assist refugee women, with a view to developing models for action by larger agencies and non-governmental organizations. While UNIFEM could not be a major funding source for refugee programmes, it hoped, by giving direct support to selected demonstration projects, to influence mainstream refugee programmes and enhance the visibility of refugee women. Moreover, in order to reduce vulnerability to future disasters, programmes for emergencies should be linked to programmes for economic rehabilitation.

(Ms. Capeling-Alakija)

34. In the past year UNIFEM had achieved a significant increase in programme delivery, a 45 per cent improvement over the preceding year. She wished to express appreciation to all donor Governments, non-governmental organizations, women's organizations, foundations, corporations and individuals, and to appeal for continued support at the forthcoming United Nations Pledging Conference.

35. Lastly, she stressed the importance of strengthening UNIFEM's advocacy role, which involved a growing constituency of dedicated advocates in donor countries and an expanding network of non-governmental organization partners with solid links to women at the grass-roots level. As at June 1991, national committees of UNIFEM had been established in Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Iceland, New Zealand, Norway, the Philippines, Sweden and the United States of America, and Committees were in process of formation in Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

36. National Committees were UNIFEM's national base. They played a crucial role in fostering Government support, raising resources and building alliances with women's organizations, non-governmental organizations, the business community, parliamentarians and academics through information and development education. They could also be instrumental in bridging the gap that still existed between women in the North and the South.

37. Miss HABACHY (Office of Human Resources Management) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on improvement of the status of women in the Secretariat (A/46/377), prepared in response to General Assembly resolutions 45/125 and 45/239 C, which set certain targets for increasing the number of women in the Secretariat with a view to achieving a general participation of 30 per cent by the end of 1990 and, if possible, 35 per cent by 1995. Following the adoption of the resolutions, the Secretary-General had informed Member States that meeting the new targets would require the recruitment of at least 75 women a year out of a total annual average of less than 200 appointments; and that the target for posts at D-1 level and above would mean that two out of every three appointments at those levels would have to be women. That would call for the continuing support of Member States and he had asked for their cooperation in helping the Secretariat to identify qualified women.

38. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management had organized meetings with members of the Asian and Latin American and Caribbean regional groups and planned to hold meetings with the remaining regional groups before completing the action programme for 1991-1995. The Secretary-General had also written to all heads of departments and officers drawing their attention to the new targets and had approved the recommendations of the Steering Committee for Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat concerning promotion, assignment and recruitment of women (ST/SGB/237).

(Miss Habachy)

39. In the period July 1990 to June 1991 the percentage of women in the United Nations Secretariat had risen from 28.3 to 29.2, which was short of the target. With regard to posts at the D-1 level and above, the number of women had risen from 26 (7.2 per cent) compared with 354 men in June 1990, to 32 (8.6 per cent) compared with 340 men in June 1991. As at the end of June 1991 there were 759 women in the Secretariat out of a total of 2,600 staff in posts subject to geographical distribution, compared with 725 women out of a total of 2,561 staff in June 1990. She drew attention to the tables in the report and to paragraph 14, which stated that the tables in annexes I and II were reproduced from document A/46/370 on the composition of the Secretariat.

40. The Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women in the Secretariat, which had been set up in 1986 as part of the United Nations first action programme to overcome obstacles to women's full integration in the Organization, had continued to serve as an advisory body to the Secretary-General, and she herself had continued to serve as Focal Point in the Secretariat. She was deeply concerned about the frustrations faced by many women in the Organization, in both Professional and General Service categories. The retrenchment exercise had depleted the number of available posts, so that, despite excellent performance, many women had no prospects of promotion in the foreseeable future. Despite considerable effort and the good intentions of many colleagues, the rate of improvement remained slow. Continued support from Member States was needed in order to attain the targets and to fill vacancies with qualified women, particularly at the highest levels. The services of a well-qualified consultant had been retained to help the Secretariat in preparing the action programme for 1991-1995 requested by the General Assembly. An outline of the report was expected to be available in time for the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women but regrettably could not be produced in time for the current session of the General Assembly.

41. Mr. VAN DER HEIJDEN (Netherlands), speaking on behalf of the European Community, expressed support for the convening of a world conference on women in 1995, regarding it as a good opportunity to review and appraise the progress made in implementing the Forward-looking Strategies and reaffirm the priority given by the United Nations to the advancement of women. The conference would enable the international community to demonstrate its political will to bring about profound social and economic changes to eliminate the structural imbalances that perpetuated the unequal position of women in society. The Twelve attached great importance to the full involvement of non-governmental organizations in the conference beginning with the preparatory stage. Non-governmental women's organizations had played a constructive role in ensuring the success of the Nairobi conference. The NGO-Forum should be encouraged to work closely with the 1995 conference. Parallel meetings of the Forum and the conference should be held at convenient locations to facilitate interaction between them.

(Mr. van der Heijden, Netherlands)

42. Women's participation in the decision-making process and their access to information must be strengthened to ensure their full participation at all levels and increased participation by women in official delegations at international conferences should be encouraged. He hoped that the interregional consultation on women in public life would take place in the near future and provide an opportunity for a fruitful exchange of views between female politicians and other women active in political and public affairs. The modalities of participation should be clarified and further work could be done on the substance and expected results of the consultation.

43. The issue of abused women and trafficking in women could not be separated from human rights. The Community strove to prevent such abuses and dealt with persons responsible for them in accordance with the relevant national laws. The recommendations put forward by Amnesty International to protect women from human rights violations were extremely valuable. The Commission on the Status of Women could play an important role in that regard, if the existing mechanisms for dealing with communications were strengthened. He hoped that the Commission would be able to take a decision on modifying the procedure for considering communications at its session in 1992.

44. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) played an important role in publishing statistics and indicators on women, particularly their participation in the informal sector. The Community hoped that the Institute would continue to concentrate on its research and training activities and improve its effectiveness.

45. He stressed the link between the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and the application of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The Twelve supported the activities of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and endorsed its general recommendations Nos. 16 to 18. The achievement of de jure and de facto equality of women should enable both parents to participate fully in family life as well as in the labour market without affecting conditions of tenure. On that point, he emphasized that the increased participation by women in economic life required, inter alia, adequate child-care facilities.

46. The Twelve welcomed Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/22, on national, regional and international machinery for the advancement of women. Such machinery was essential to sustain national programmes at a consistent level and ensure that women's interests were fully taken into account at all levels of policy-making. United Nations bodies could play an important role in facilitating the exchange of information among national mechanisms.

47. The Community was also pleased by Council resolution 1991/18 on violence against women in all its forms, and General Assembly resolution 45/114 on domestic violence. Although the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women did not explicitly address it, it was impossible

(Mr. van der Heijden, Netherlands)

to create greater public awareness of the issue, increase assistance to victims of violence and establish preventive measures.

48. The Twelve hoped that the overall representation of women in the Secretariat, particularly at senior decision-making and managerial levels, would be significantly increased. To that end, Member States should encourage more women to apply for posts in the Secretariat. The specific problems facing female refugees also deserved special attention.

49. Since the adoption of the Forward-looking Strategies, considerable progress had been made in eliminating de jure discrimination against women. Nevertheless, de facto discrimination still existed in all countries, regardless of their level of development. Positive action was required to ensure effective law enforcement and eliminate de facto discrimination.

50. The integration of women in development operations was of vital importance for economic progress and sustainable development. Emphasis should be given to providing an appropriate infrastructure to promote the role of women in economic growth. Women's interests were increasingly being taken into account in economic projects and programmes. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had made steady progress in its work in that respect and should continue to play its catalytic role. Lastly, the Twelve stressed the need to elaborate strategies to ensure a constructive review and appraisal of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies at the 1995 world conference on women. The Community would continue to make every effort to ensure that the goals set forth in the Strategies were attained.

51. Mrs. DIALLO (Senegal) expressed satisfaction that for 1992-1993 a post of interregional adviser on advancement of women was included in the regular programme of technical cooperation in order to assist States regarding national machinery for the advancement of women and the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. The assistance of an adviser should be strengthened in developing countries to ensure the proper drafting and submission of periodic reports.

52. For the developing countries, cycles of economic recession, chronic indebtedness and extreme poverty had been major obstacles to the achievement of the overall objectives of equality, development and peace in the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. Accordingly, the world conference on women to be held in 1995 should formulate specific guidelines for the effective implementation of the Strategies.

53. Senegal was strengthening its national machinery for the advancement of women in order to ensure total participation in preparing for that conference. She regretted that the Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life, which had been scheduled for 1991, had not taken place and would appreciate information on when it would be convened.

(Mrs. Diallo, Senegal)

54. General Assembly resolution 45/126 requested the Secretary-General to prepare for the world conference on women to be held in 1995 a report on the progress made to increase female literacy. With the help of UNESCO, Senegal was making an enormous effort to expand and improve its literacy programmes for women and young girls.

55. It was gratifying to note that the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) had made significant progress in research on work by women in the informal sector. Her delegation strongly supported the organization in African countries of training workshops to ensure better coordination of work and improve the methods used in data collection and the compilation of statistics on the contribution of women in that sector.

56. Since women were the first victims of ecological deterioration caused by droughts and desertification, her Government was particularly interested in seeing the concerns of women included in the agenda of the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992. The promotion of the rights of women was a basic aspect of the enjoyment of human rights. It was essential, therefore, for women to play an active role in preparing and holding the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights. The results of the Conference should reflect the concerns of women and serve as a basis for the 1995 world conference on women. In their recommendations to the Preparatory Committee for the world conference, the relevant United Nations bodies should put forward specific proposals for protecting the rights of women.

57. She reiterated her delegation's deep concern about the poor representation of women from developing countries in the United Nations Secretariat. The Secretary-General should consider the possibility of assisting the Governments of developing countries, particularly those in Africa, in better identifying and selecting candidates for decision-making and administrative posts.

58. Senegal was carrying out a study on effective participation by women in decision-making with regard to peace and disarmament with the assistance of a United Nations consultant in order to identify and eliminate the obstacles to such participation. In that connection, consideration should be given to the possibility of reallocating funds released through disarmament to finance activities for women.

59. Her country attached particular importance to the implementation of Economic and Social Council resolution 1991/18, on violence against women in all its forms, and supported the elaboration of an international instrument to deal with that problem. Consideration should also be given to the overriding need to solve the basic problems confronting women, such as extreme poverty, hunger, disease and unemployment, which contributed to aggressive behaviour in the home.

60. Miss SAAD (Egypt) emphasized the need to ensure that women-related issues were not introduced as a token display of concern for purely political reasons. The United Nations should seek a new coherent and comprehensive approach to women's issues. The work of the Second and Third Committees on women overlapped and the relevant input was not fed into the system. The Commission on the Status of Women, which was the central forum for women in the United Nations system, had no opportunity to comment on the operational or research activities of United Nations bodies dealing with the advancement of women. The existing machinery did not seem to have an impact on the operational programmes and projects directly bearing on the lives of women and did not provide input at an early stage into preparations for the various major conferences relating to women.

61. Her delegation proposed that the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) should function as a treaty body dealing with human rights questions. In that connection, she noted that Council resolution 1991/25 recommended that a close relationship should be maintained between CEDAW and other human rights bodies. The membership of CEDAW could consist of intergovernmental experts with increased participation by representatives of non-governmental organizations in order to provide the Organization with the necessary action-oriented input at the intergovernmental and Secretariat level. The International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) could function as a research body for CEDAW. It would also be necessary to establish a closer relationship with the secretariat serving that new structure and with the Department of Public Information and the Statistical Office of DIESA.

62. The effect of that change would be for women's issues to be dealt with under the different agenda items of the General Assembly and addressed by the bodies concerned in an integrated manner. Consequently, no separate agenda items on women would be allocated to the Second or Third Committees. The overall responsibility for ensuring such mainstreaming at the intergovernmental level would rest with the different legislative organs of the system, and the head of the secretariat of the Commission on the Status of Women would act through the Administrative Committee on Coordination to coordinate mainstreaming in the United Nations system.

63. Mrs. OUEDRAOGO (Burkina Faso) said that on the tenth anniversary of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women most women were still relegated to a secondary role despite the lip service routinely paid to their importance. She welcomed the activities of the Commission on the Status of Women and of CEDAW, but regretted that despite some progress over the past 10 years, women world-wide continued to earn an average of 30 per cent less than men for the same work and the situation of rural women continued to deteriorate, especially in Africa, where they were often the victims of cultural traditions and catastrophic economic situations.

(Mrs. Ouedraogo, Burkina Faso)

64. Over the past five years, Burkina Faso had progressed towards its main objectives of promoting the economic and social role of women, facilitating their access to education, training and credit and relieving the burden of their household tasks by, inter alia, teaching 17,000 women to read, installing grain mills for women's collectives, building child-care facilities, supplying drinking water, promoting land ownership activities by women and establishing a credit bank for women's collectives.

65. Her delegation regretted that the High-level Interregional Consultation on Women in Public Life, called for in General Assembly resolution 44/77, had not been held because of financial constraints. An information, education and action campaign to induce women to take an interest in public life should be conducted. In Burkina Faso, women had formed political associations and parties, and three women headed or held prominent posts in three opposition parties. In rural areas, literacy programmes had encouraged women to participate in political and national life, though the persistence of traditional male and female roles remained problematic.

66. She appreciated the emphasis which INSTRAW placed on research, training, information and development policy-design, particularly in the areas of the informal sector, the environment, drinking water and sanitation. However, her delegation was concerned about the revelation in the INSTRAW report that some United Nations organizations still did not include a women-in-development dimension in their evaluation guidelines. It therefore supported the suggestions contained in paragraph 32 of the report (A/46/325) for redressing that situation.

67. The status of women in the Secretariat was also disquieting; the failure to reach the objective of a 30 per cent participation rate by the end of 1990 clouded the prospects for reaching the objective of 35 per cent by 1995. Her delegation endorsed the recommendations of the Steering Committee for the Improvement of the Status of Women, and felt that special efforts should be made to ensure better representation of women from developing countries.

68. her delegation endorsed the proposed title of the world conference on women to be held in 1995, and agreed that the conference should be brief and should involve minimal cost. National and regional preparations for the conference should provide an opportunity to take stock of the implementation of the Nairobi Strategies.

69. She drew attention to the regional seminar held in Ouagadougou to discuss traditional practices affecting the health of women and children, which had yielded valuable results and recommendations for action by the Commission on the Status of Women.

70. Mrs. SILVA (Chile) said that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ratified by Chile in 1989, and the Nairobi Strategies were legally binding texts. It was therefore mandatory to

(Mrs. Silva, Chile)

incorporate the premises and proposals into Chilean legislation in accordance with the principle of the primacy of international law over domestic law. Accordingly, on 3 January 1991, Chile had established the National Service for Women (Servicio nacional de la mujer, or SERNAM). SERNAM was an operationally decentralized body having its own assets and reporting to the President of the Republic through the Ministry of Planning and Cooperation. The woman heading SERNAM held the rank of Minister of State and attended the deliberations of the Council of Ministers. The mandate of SERNAM was to coordinate, plan and propose policies, plans and programmes to incorporate women on an equal basis into all areas of Chilean life and to ensure the elimination of any discriminatory practices against women.

71. As indicated in its 1991 periodic report to CEDAW, the democratic Government of Chile, upon assuming power in March 1990, had been faced with an enormous cumulative social debt in many areas affecting women, such as education, health, social welfare and housing. SERNAM had therefore undertaken and proposed a number of activities to meet the objectives of equality, development and peace set forth in the Nairobi Strategies. Those activities included public information and awareness campaigns, the elaboration of concrete proposals to the Chilean Parliament and various Ministries, seminars on women's issues and the establishment of working commissions to study current legislation and to propose legislative reforms to eliminate discrimination against women in civil, judicial, criminal and labour matters.

72. For example, the Labour Commission had proposed various reforms to the Ministry of Labour concerning women's access to the labour market and parental leave provisions; the Civil and Criminal Commissions had prepared a draft law amending the Civil Code on property regulations and other legal provisions; and the Judicial Commission was elaborating a plan to establish family courts.

73. SERNAM had also designed an integrated, multisectoral programme to support women of limited means. Pilot programmes had been coordinated in five municipalities as a way of elaborating a model for eventual implementation at the national level.

74. SERNAM collaborated closely with other ministries, including the Ministry of Education (to repeal regulations prohibiting pregnant students and new mothers from attending daytime classes), the Ministry of Health (to improve the access of women of limited means to medical services) and the Ministry of Housing (to implement a programme under which female heads of households could participate in the proposal, design and establishment of community spaces). In addition, agreements had been signed with the Institute of Agricultural Development to incorporate rural women into programmes concerning the transfer of technology and access to credit.

(Mrs. Silva, Chile)

75. A national plan had been worked out for an integrated work programme that included the management of domestic violence; the maintenance of the Santiago Centre for Women Affected by Domestic Violence and the extension of that pilot project to all areas of the country; the conduct of awareness campaigns; and the continuation of Chile's police training course on the legal, medical and psychological aspects of domestic violence.

76. Lastly, SERNAM had established information centres on women's rights in each region of the country to enable women to combat discrimination through knowledge of their rights, to establish links between women and SERNAM and to provide information on programmes and benefits for women under existing social policies.

77. Chile's efforts to achieve equality, development and peace were intended not only to eliminate discrimination against women, but also to realize its Government's primary objective of fully integrating Chile into the commitee of nations and ensuring its adherence to the international legal order.

78. Mrs. WARZAZI (Morocco) said that the problem of the status of women could not realistically be expected to resolve itself in the near future. Ten years after the entry into force of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, about 60 States Members of the United Nations had not yet ratified that instrument; the Moroccan Government had recently begun the process of ratification. In addition, the information reported by the Commission on the Status of Women showed that there was a wide gap between de jure and de facto discrimination against women, despite the plethora of studies, initiatives and policies undertaken. For example, although the United Nations had published 1,450 documents on development, education and equality between 1985 and 1989, 1985 figures showed that almost two thirds of the world's illiterate population were women. It was time for all concerned to realize that development and the advancement of women were interdependent.

79. The relationship between women and development had been addressed at the August 1991 conference in Cairo on the evaluation and enhancement of the role of women in the Muslim world. The conference now being held in Tangiers, which had opened on 10 October 1991 and which dealt with the theme of women, the State and development, was studying such issues as the family and development, the participation of women in society in general and the influence of Islam on social and legal readjustment. It was important, however, that those activities should be translated into concrete results.

80. She commended the work of INSTRAW, UNIFEM and the Division for the Advancement of Women at the Vienna Office, which had often been hampered by lack of resources. Governments should make use of the statistical studies conducted by INSTRAW, particularly the statistical method of evaluating production in the informal sector, which comprised most women in developing countries. With two thirds of the world's women living in poverty, the activities of UNIFEM directed towards raising their economic status were also

(Mrs. Warzazi, Morocco)

of vital importance. The UNIFEM initiative of establishing national committees in donor countries promised to narrow the gap separating North from South.

81. With respect to the status of women in the Secretariat, it appeared that the United Nations did not always practise what it preached. The slowness in meeting established targets for representation indicated either the persistence of prejudices against women or the unwillingness of men to give up their near-monopoly of international posts. More dynamic action by the Secretary-General was needed so that women's representation in the Secretariat would no longer depend exclusively on whether Governments decided to appoint female candidates. Campaigns should be conducted in universities, women's associations, unions, etc.

82. The information contained in the publication The World's Women 1970-1990: Trends and Statistics indicated that, even though 828 million women contributed significantly to economic production, and women comprised 57 per cent of the agricultural workforce in 114 developing countries, women were still far from attaining equality with men in terms of political power, economic remuneration and equality of opportunity. In addressing that flagrant injustice, a June 1991 seminar, held in preparation for the World Conference on Human Rights had concluded that the problems faced by women were studied as an economic and social development issue and not as a human rights issue. The seminar had therefore recommended that the agenda of the Conference should include an item on the promotion and protection of the human rights of women, that human rights monitoring mechanisms should take the status of women fully into account in their interpretation of human rights provisions, that the mandate of the Commission on the Status of Women should be expanded to include consideration of communications and identification of human rights violations against women and that a rapporteur on the promotion and protection of women's rights should be appointed to the Commission on Human Rights. Moreover, the Chairman of CEDAW had proposed radical changes at the United Nations which would give the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and CEDAW equal status with other human rights instruments and monitoring mechanisms.

83. It was time for the world to discard its prejudices and archaic attitudes towards women. The new world order currently taking shape would not be durable unless it was built on a foundation of equality, justice and harmony between nations, between peoples and between the sexes.

The meeting rose at 1.11 p.m.